Wm. H. Thomas - No. 41
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A

Dissertation on
Cynanche Trachealis or Croup

The disease which is the subject of the following Dissertation is placed by Dr Cullen under the order of Phlegmasiæ, class of Pyrexiæ, and by our Professor of the Practice among the diseases of the Respiratory Organs. It is defined by the former gentleman "an Inflammation of the Glottis, Larynx or upper part of the Trachea, whether it affects the membranes of these parts, or the muscles adjoining

It has been described by different authors under various names, as Angina Polyposa, Tracheitis Cynanche Trachealis, and the popular name of Croup and Hives

Cynanche Trachealis is considered as a disease of rather modern origin, and the honour of more particularly explaining its nature and symptoms, and of pointing out those remedies which suc-

cacied best in its cure, has been given to Dr Home of Edinburgh.

Cynanche Trachealis is confined in its attacks to early life. Children from the first to the fifth year (particularly the ruddy and robust) are more frequently affected by it: it has been known to affect children within the month, and even adults are not beyond its reach: the latter cases are extremely rare, so much so, that the disease may be considered as confined to children, and may with propriety be classed among the diseases incident to childhood

It is I believe generally admitted that our disease is not contagious, although it may prevail as an Epidemic at certain seasons of the year. One peculiarity in the disease before us is, its being endemial to some particular places and confined to very narrow limits." This is proved by the fact, that at Edinburgh it is hardly ever known, while at Leith it prevails to a great degree: in Baltimore it is scarcely ever seen, whilst Fells-Point which is only a small

distance from the city is desolated every succeeding Spring.

This disease would appear as if it was hereditary to some families, whilst others who are placed in precisely the same situation, escape its attacks. Children who have been once affected with it, are peculiarly liable to a return of the disease on slight exposures to cold, and a second attack is considered lighter than the one which preceded it.

Having thus briefly considered the history and nature of Cynanche Trachealis, I shall proceed to mention some of the most striking appearances which present themselves, on dissection of those who have died of this disease. A preternatural membrane is generally found to exist throughout the Trachea, and in some instances to extend downwards into the Bronchiæ: it adheres but very slightly to the sides of the Trachea; so slightly indeed, that it can frequently be separated entire: the proper lining of the Trachea appears to be unaffected by ulceration and erosion, and vestiges of inflammation may in some cases be observed. The lungs sometimes

show no vestige of the disease, and at others are affected with inflammation resembling that of Peripneumonia Notha. This preternatural membrane according to Professor Dorsey's dissections, never so completely fills up the Trachea as to prevent breathing: he has always found the muscles of the Glottis and Epiglottis so much contracted, as to induce him to believe the difficulty of breathing arose from that cause.

Of the exciting cause. The most frequent exciting cause of Cynanche Trachealis, appears to be the application of cold: sudden vicissitudes of the weather appear also to favour attacks of this disease: hence the Spring and Autumn are the seasons in which it is most prevalent: low marshy situations, and those near the sea coast where there is a greater proportion of moisture in the atmosphere are thought to predispose to this disorder.

What effect a disordered condition of the Alimentary Canal may have in producing this disorder, I shall not pretend to determine: the strong sympathy which exists between it, and the other parts of the system, would

tend to give validity to this opinion. Underwood in his work on the diseases of children, enumerates this among the exciting causes of this disease.

Of the Proximate Cause. As regards the proximate cause of Cynanche Trachealis, not a little discussion has been entered into, every one who has ventured to advance an opinion disagreeing from those who preceded him. As this point has engaged the attention of the most learned of the Medical Profession since the origin of the disease, it would perhaps be considered as the highest presumption in me, were I to attempt to advance one: I shall therefore content myself by mentioning some of those opinion, which have appeared most plausible and which have enlisted in their defence men of the soundest judgement and most extensive information.

The first which I shall mention is that advanced by Dr Home: he considered the original seat of the disease, to be in the Mucous Glands of the Trachea: I shall quote his own words as cited by Dr Willson

"When there happens a very great secretion of this coagu-

[illegible] the [illegible] of the [illegible] disorder [illegible] either [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

ion, which [illegible] [illegible] is [illegible] treatment [illegible] [illegible] was considered by [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] is [illegible] [illegible] for the [illegible] [illegible] some time.

The [illegible] [illegible] our learned [illegible] the Doctor [illegible] [illegible], [illegible] the most [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] which come on suddenly [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] of those who [illegible] [illegible] of this disease: upon examination no symptoms of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] when the symptoms show themselves slowly" [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] inflammation" [illegible] inflammatory [illegible] [illegible] be [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] of them, [illegible] more [illegible] than any which [illegible] [illegible].

(4 The Symptoms. The symptoms of bronchitis [illegible] may be divided into [illegible] those which [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] inflammatory diseases. To begin with the [illegible] symptoms; those which generally show themselves, [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] which sometimes [illegible] suddenly [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]. The breathing is performed with a wheezing [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] the [illegible] the [illegible] the [

of the mind, demand the most serious and the most judicious exertions of the physician to combat them.

[illegible] the manner which obviously proceed from debility calculated to relax the muscles of the stomach and in the act by causing a relaxation of the spasm. The nausea, the [illegible] [illegible] in the stomach, and in the [illegible] in the throat, should be given in some bitter or aromatic such as [illegible] the stomach is the improbable, [illegible] is really impaired.

Among the various complaints which have been imputed to bachelors, the comic satirists appear to have been most certain in their much more certain in their [illegible] and to have a much more lasting impression upon the system. The satirist and the [illegible] manner [illegible] alternately [illegible] in decided terms, [illegible] at such intervals as the urgency and [illegible] the patient may [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] two months [illegible]

[illegible] in [illegible] years, in a warm water [illegible] to be repeated according to circumstances. [illegible] in this way we shall seldom have cause to [illegible] other than a [illegible] with its effects: a child two or three months [illegible] half a grain.

At the same time that we exhibit the above remedy we would place the patient in a warm bath, and continue them therein for ten, fifteen or twenty minutes. This is a most useful remedy, promotes the perspiration, [illegible] the [illegible], quiets excitement, and has effected in many instances entirely removed the disease. The warm bath I am inclined to believe would be found a most useful remedy in many other diseases of children in which it is seldom or never resorted to.

The disease will sometimes yield to these remedies, however we should be disappointed, we should resort to copious venesection and a repetition of the emetic and warm bath. The good effects we are to anticipate from venesection are the following: an immediate [illegible] of inflammation, relieving the [illegible]

symptoms [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] require the mind which is to [illegible] itself [illegible] disease is remaining symptoms [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] return of attack.

The attack must be extremely obstinate if [illegible] [illegible] on these remedies. Cases however are not unfrequent which will not yield [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] in the case [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] speculative [illegible] there remains the last [illegible] use of [illegible] sufficient means [illegible] but stimulate [illegible] [illegible] the exertion [illegible] to enable us [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] sion. Repeated depletion by means of cups and leeches would, with [illegible] our [illegible] and the application of a blister large enough to extend from ear to ear [illegible] at the time be of eminent advantage. The last [illegible] [illegible] frequently on the principle of revulsion, exciting inflammation on the external [illegible] [illegible] with the more deep seated.

[illegible] [illegible] these additional applications with [illegible] be found of no avail, and to our great mortification we see the disease carried upon our patient with rapid

stridor. In their embarrassing and critical situation, we are advised to bleed ad deliquium animi: when carried to this extent we are assured, that it never fails to produce immediate relief. Pushing the lancet to this extent would seem to many the height of madness, and the patient would by them be considered as irrevocably lost. Yet if they would take into consideration the great tenacity which children have been observed to display for life, they would doubtless consider this apparently rash procedure, as the only alternative left, by which life could be preserved.

"Children have been found alive upon the breasts of their mothers, who had perished of cold: they resist contagion better than adults, and recover sooner from contagious diseases: from injuries and surgical operations their recovery is more rapid: they are likewise better able to bear the operation of the most powerfull medicines. It is well known that during the growth of the human body, the proportion of fluids far exceeds that of the solids, and on account of the fullness of the vessels of children, they are extremely liable to inflammatory diseases of this kind,

and therefore often require venaesection".

I have never seen a case where the symptoms have not readily yielded to Emetics, warm bath, blisters, and moderate venaesection: yet I should not hesitate a moment bleeding to the extent advised, if required.

It is I am convinced owing to the mistaken idea of children being unable to bear the operation of powerfull and efficient remedies, that this disease has proved so fatal and has been numbered among the Opprobria Medicorum

The disease being by the above remedies completely broken down, we are next to resort to purgative medicines in order to carry off its lingering remains. Of this class, Calomel is most generally employed, and is certainly preferable to any of its kindred articles. In such high estimation has it been held by some, that it was relied on, as the only sure and effectual remedy in combating Cynanche Trachealis.